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July 28, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL:
HURWIT.NICHOLAS@EPA.GOV

Mr. Morgan Jencius
Chief
Air and Land Enforcement Branch
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10
1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 155
Seattle, WA 98101

**Re: July 6, 2021 FIFRA NOTICE OF WARNING,
Response of GEO Group, Inc.**

Dear Mr. Jencius:

This letter constitutes the response of the GEO Group, Inc., (“GEO”) requested in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (“EPA”) Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act Notice of Warning dated July 6, 2021 (“NOW”). GEO appreciates the opportunity to provide this response.

As noted in EPA’s November 24, 2020, Notice of Inspection (“NOI”), GEO began using the antimicrobial disinfectants GS Neutral Disinfectant Cleaner (EPA Reg. No. 1839-169-5741) and Sani-T-Plus® (EPA Reg. No. 10324-117-5741) (“the Disinfectants”) to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 as part of a rigorous cleaning program to maintain detainees’ health during the pandemic. The Disinfectants are commonly used in nursing homes, schools, and hospitals and are also appropriately used at Northwest ICE Processing Center (“NWIPC”).

The NOW raises two issues. First, it concludes that the Disinfectants have been applied in a manner inconsistent with their labeling due to a lack of required personal protective equipment being made available to the individuals. The NOW indicates that this conclusion is based on the need for individuals to specifically request washing of clothing following any contamination from the Disinfectants and that, consequently, individuals are not given adequate access to clean clothing. The NOW says interviews with the individuals indicate a lack of responsiveness from NWIPC staff towards the individuals’ concerns.

GEO’s internal review could not substantiate that any contaminated clothing was being reused or that the individuals were reluctant to obtain, or discouraged from obtaining, clean clothing. Nonetheless, because GEO and NWIPC staff take these concerns seriously, GEO will henceforth make sure that any individual who makes use of disinfectants are given a choice between washing contaminated clothing prior to re-use of the clothing, or the use of reusable or disposable gowns. Sufficient gowns will be made available such that individual will have access

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to new disposable gowns or freshly laundered reusable gowns for every application. The individuals will be strongly encouraged to wear the gowns and turn in the reusable gowns for laundering. GEO will expeditiously work to have the gowns available and believes this system will fully address the first concern raised in the NOW.

The second issue in the NOW is a concern, although apparently not a conclusion of violation, that some individuals are being exposed to products through inhalation when the product is being applied due to their proximity within the living areas. GEO has reviewed the matter, and is not able to substantiate any medical claims at NWIPC associated with the Disinfectants, including any associated sore throats or headaches referenced in the NOW.¹ In any event, for those individuals using the Disinfectants, appropriate PPE will continue to be provided as described on the product label. During disinfectant application, those individuals in proximity to the immediate locations of the application will be relocated for a minimum of 10 minutes to an area distant from the area of application. This approach, we believe, strikes the appropriate balance given the inappropriateness of denying access to the Disinfectants or removing individuals from the Voluntary Work Program.

Regarding either of the two issues, we are glad to talk further with EPA if EPA has any lingering concerns about the use of the Disinfectants consistent with their labeling. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at gmunson@gunster.com, or 850-521-1980.

Sincerely,



Gregory M. Munson

¹ GEO notes that it is unable to locate, and believes it never received, Attachment 14 to the November 24, 2020 NOI that apparently contained complaints received from detainees at the facility. If EPA provides this attachment, GEO will promptly review the complaints and take any necessary remedial actions.